

BOOK REVIEWS

John M. Porter, MD, Book Review Section Editor

Surgery of the aorta and its branches

Bruce Gewertz, Lewis Schwartz; Philadelphia; 2000; W.B. Saunders; 479 pages; \$165.00.

Aortic surgery, territory that until recently was only explored by surgical specialists, has rapidly evolved into an area traversed by multiple competing specialties. To stay the course and steer clear of danger, Gewertz and Schwartz have edited a timely monograph on the subject that functions as a review of where we've been, as well as a perspective on where we're going. These editors have enlisted an outstanding group of authors to guide interested readers through up-to-date information on aortic surgery, while maintaining appropriate balance in the vital area of reconstructive vascular surgery.

Section editors selected coauthors from their own institutions so that consistent thought prevails throughout the sections of the book. Developmental anomalies of the aorta and basic principles of aortic surgery nicely complement more clinically oriented chapters that fully cover the current practice of aortic and visceral artery surgery. Two sections in particular (thoracoabdominal and pararenal aortic aneurysms and renovascular disease) are extremely well written. They provide depth that the trainee will find in few other texts and that will enlighten even the most experienced vascular surgeon. Photographic images are sharp, and artwork is well done. A series of color plates is provided at the beginning of the text to enhance corresponding black-and-white images in some of the chapters.

Thanks to diligent editing, the volume maintains uniformity of style and content despite representation from six major university medical centers. Even the reference lists are relatively current, which is a feat in itself. This monograph will appeal to all clinicians interested in aortic surgery. It is affordably priced, full of technical pearls, and well written. I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to comment on a book that really meets its mark.

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Vascular surgery highlights 1999-2000

Alun Davies; Oxford; 2000; Health Press; 92 pages; \$19.95.

This book aims to highlight recent developments in a limited number of vascular surgical topics. Each chapter contains a summary of what the authors feel is likely to be major changes to current surgical practice, resulting in a list of what's "in" and "out" for their individual area of expertise. The chapters are very concise, only averaging

around 2000 words for each area, some of which are very broad topics. Most of the chapters are well written, but there are areas where the quoted evidence has been in the public domain for a number of years and does not really qualify as a highlight of 1999-2000. Some of this results from the choice of topics for the book, a number of which have not seen any publications likely to result in a major change in practice over the last 2 or 3 years. There are some areas of controversy that have been omitted from the text, such as the management of vascular graft infection or the role of lower limb angioplasty, and the book may have been more complete with these in place.

It is not entirely clear who the intended readership of this book will be. Many of the regular subscribers to this journal are likely to find it of limited use. For those looking for evidence on which to base their practice, the very restricted space each author has been given does not allow a full enough presentation of the facts. Although it may act as a useful collection of relatively recent references for the area of interest, much of this information can be gathered reasonably quickly from Internet-based databases of medical publications. Recently qualified doctors studying for their initial postgraduate examinations and, perhaps, enthusiastic medical students may find this overview of current practice useful, and certainly a thorough knowledge of the facts presented in each chapter would be enough to impress all but the hardest of examiners. At only \$20, this book represents reasonable value for those involved with the care of vascular patients who require a relatively quick overview of each of the topics presented.

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Plasma lipids and their role in disease

Philip Barter, Kerry-Anne Rye; Amsterdam; 1999; Harwood Academic; 352 pages; \$120.00.

This 350-page volume, part of a series on *Advances in Vascular Biology*, addresses plasma lipids and their roles in disease and focuses on atherosclerosis. The book is ably edited by Philip J. Barter and Kerry-Anne Rye of the Department of Medicine at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the Lipid Research Laboratories in Adelaide, Australia. Twenty-eight basic scientist contributors offer 16 chapters, including a well-written "Overview of Plasma Lipid Transport" by the editors. Ten of the 28 contributing authors are Australian with other authors from Finland, France, the United States, and Canada. Well-chosen references extend well back into the past for key contributions and are up-to-date, including 1998.